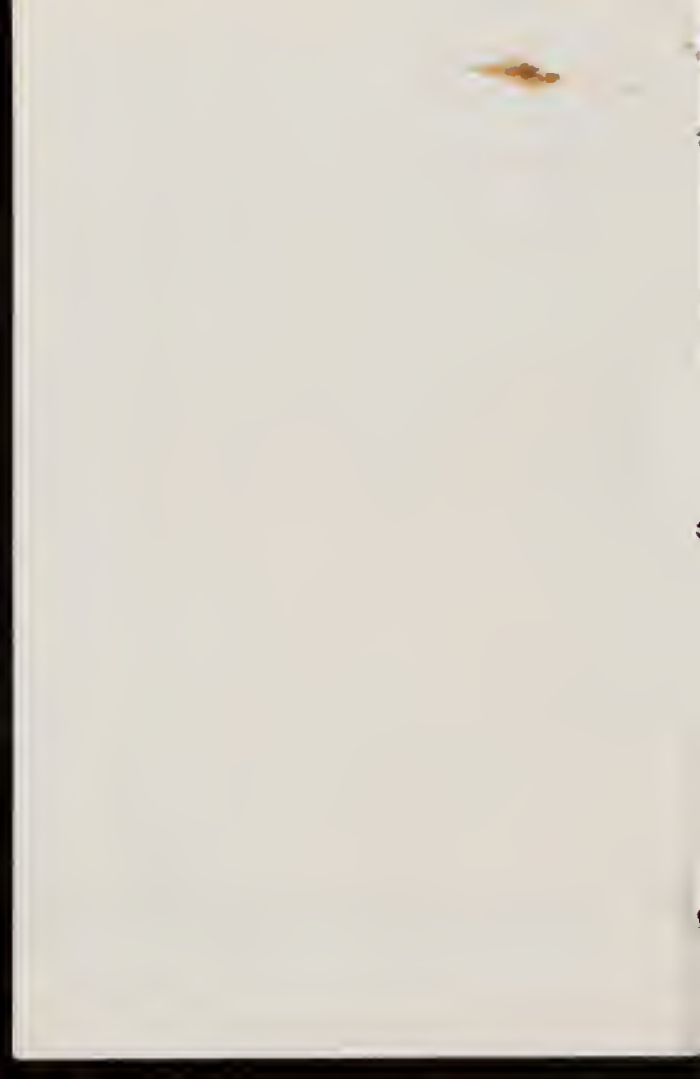


*A Library in an
Indian Bazaar*





A Far-seeing Dream

Buddha Mal was an orthodox Hindu of the Chhatri caste living in Etawah. He was a worshipper at the idol of Vishnu. In keeping with his position of Deputy Inspector of Schools he had no small degree of learning, being versed in the Sanskrit and Persian languages, as well as Hindi, Urdu and English. He met with missionaries here and there and they persuaded him to read the Bible, comparing it with his own religious books. He learned Greek also, so as to study the New Testament in the original. After ten years of such study he was thoroughly convinced that the Christian religion was true, and that without Christ there was no salvation. At sixty years of age he was publicly baptized. He was turned out of his home, pled with, scorned, preached at by his Arya Samaj brother and associates ; but remained firm in his confession.

He caught a vision—the vision of Service. ‘In my old age I have come to Christ,’ he said, ‘At this late hour what can I do for Him and for my fellow-men?’ He looked over the city of Etawah. He saw a city of forty-two thousand people. There were Government



THE LIBRARY BUILDING AND BAZAAR

schools, Hindu schools, Muhammadan schools; Hindu temples, Muhammadan mosques, Arya Samaj meeting hall, and Theosophical hall. Not one Christian school or hospital; no Christian church building; only two missionaries' houses away on the outskirts of the city, on the veranda of one of which Sunday Church services were held. There was very little of a concrete nature to meet the eye of the non-Christian and say, 'The Christians are serving in the city of Etawah.'

Buddha Mal's dream took a practical turn: 'I will build a library in the heart of the city, for Etawah has no library for the public. It shall be a public library. It shall serve all and it shall witness for Christ.' On Mission land in the bazaar he built three shops, the rent of which was to be a regular income for the library. He made plans for building the library over these shops. Then, as he saw the Angel of Death coming to lead him into a fuller life he left his unfinished plans in the care of the Mission and went to meet his Lord.

The Dream Takes Concrete Form

A small, neat and attractive building has been built and occupies a position of importance in the heart of the Etawah bazaar. Upon a

signboard, placed in full view, one can read in Hindi, Urdu or English the following legend: 'Buddha Mal Public Library.'

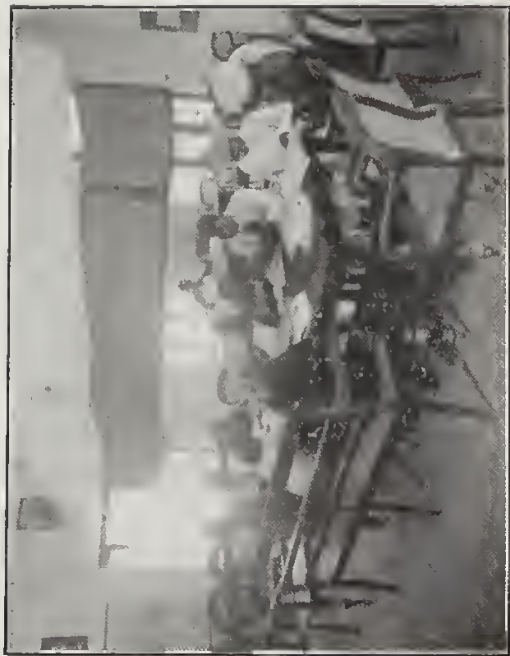
Books in three languages were ordered—Hindi, Urdu and English, so as to meet the need of every class of reader. In stocking the library, effort was made to order such books, as well as could be judged, as Buddha Mal the founder would himself have ordered. He was a positive Christian, dedicated to making others acquainted with Christ, so Christian religious books are in the majority. There is, however, a goodly general collection of other kinds—good novels, books on educational, social, moral and political problems, and current periodicals. There are at present seven hundred books, and more are gradually being stocked. It is a growing institution.

The opening ceremony was attended by many of the officials and other leading men of the city. The District Magistrate, who is a Hindu, presided. He had himself been desirous of a public library for Etawah and was exceedingly gratified to see that the Christians had provided one. The spirit of service which motivated Buddha Mal in this enterprise, he said, was worthy of the praise of all. The meeting was brought to a close, the library hall officially unlocked by the District Magistrate

and declared to be opened. The library is a concrete testimony to the city of Etawah of Christian service.

A Cosmopolitan Gathering

If you should visit the city of Etawah in the late afternoon, and should make your way into the central bazaar, there you would see a two-storey building with an outside door and steps leading up to the second storey. Every now and then you see some one, or a group of several, pause before the door, ascend the steps, and pass from your view into the room above. It must be a cosmopolitan gathering there, for some who enter are well-dressed, some poorly clad: some are wearing the red fez of the Muhammadan, some the turban of the Hindu, and some the 'Gandhi cap' of the patriot—either Muhammadan or Hindu. Some appear to be students, others are labourers or professional men coming from their shops or offices. Your curiosity is aroused. You desire to see what the occasion is which draws together such a varied group. You also ascend the stairs. The first object to catch your attention is a large table, on which there are newspapers and magazines, and around which are gathered, as readers, several of those whom you saw ascend



THE READING ROOM

the stairs. Back against the wall, on three sides of the room, are book-cases filled with various books, many of which will require an interpreter if you wish to read the titles. As your glance proceeds around the room you see other readers seated in chairs drawn up before open windows, and in their hands are books which have been given them by the librarian. Just at this moment a young Indian leaves his desk, steps up to you, and asks if there is anything he can do for you. He sees that you are a European so he addresses you in English; otherwise he would have spoken in Urdu or Hindi. From his talk you ascertain that he is a well-educated young man, and later you learn that he has finished two years of college work, then passed his three years' theological course. He leads you to the large table so that you can see what is being read. One young man is engrossed in reading the Hindi Bible, another a novel, a third a book on comparative religion; others are reading newspapers, another an old copy of the *National Geographic Magazine* which a friend has donated. Whatever they are reading, we know the influence is for good, not for evil. The librarian then shows you the register, signed by everyone entering the room. From it you learn that there are as many as seventy visitors in an evening.

An Evangelizing Influence

Inasmuch as this library gives us a wonderful opportunity for contacts with non-Christians, it is a foundation stone on which we hope to raise the edifice of our city evangelistic work. Within the library itself the librarian has an excellent opportunity of presenting Christ in private talks with individuals. Many readers of the Bible come to him for explanations.

Time after time it has been expressed by several of the thoughtful men who frequent the library that this is one of the best means of sowing Gospel seed quietly and thoroughly without opposition. One Hindu gentleman said that for the last few years he has had the desire of making a comparative study of religion, but, failing to find the means, he has had to wait until now.

The work of the city evangelistic missionary is linked up closely with the library, for personal contacts for him are frequently made through this means. Interviews at the library itself are sometimes requested. One day the missionary's bazaar preaching encouraged a doctor to linger on the edge of the crowd and ask for an interview in the library. This was gladly granted. The interview, however, developed into a group conference, for the others present,

in true Indian fashion, pressed in to listen to the conversation between the sahib and the questioner.

To Crystallize an Opportunity

In India, even more than in Palestine, there are many with the disposition of Nicodemus, who, while utterly sincere, fear the consequences of showing vital interest in Christ. They would never reveal their heart's attitude except with a confidant. Herein lies one handicap of the otherwise well appointed room of the library. A smaller room, to be used as a prayer or conference room, is also needed. To offset this difficulty the missionary has invited inquirers to come to his bungalow which is a mile and a half from the central bazaar. Some do so. One young man came, in order to secure this privacy, and very definitely acknowledged the Saviourhood of the Lord Jesus and the fact that Christ died and rose again for him. To crystallize such opportunities it is hoped that the adjoining room can some day be built. Meanwhile the building as it stands can be used as a combined library and hall for preaching and stereoptican lectures. It is as yet new. God grant that it may be used to the fullest extent for bringing men into that

saving relationship with Christ which Buddha Mal experienced after his ten years' search.

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byterian Church, No. 18.**



A HOME AT CHRISTMAS TIME

Christmas in India

Christmas in India

Happy New Year ! May the heart of every one who reads this letter and hears this message be greatly blessed in this coming year ! I almost gave you a greeting such as we often hear in India, 'May you live forever,' but remembering my 'Do unto others' I refrained from such a blessing.

Once I passed a group of small boys playing by the roadside. In answer to their greeting I said, 'Live forever.' To a little boy who stood alone I only said, 'Salaam.' Returning a little later I noticed the alone boy was crying. When asked the trouble he replied, 'You didn't tell me to live forever.'

Although I should never cry if no one ever said to me 'Live forever,' yet, I have been glad indeed to be alive during this Christmas season. —glad to have a share in telling of that little life that lay in a manger. Christmas ! How I love the sound of that word ! Once I heard a mother say to her little boy as she cuddled him close on Christmas Morn, 'Merry Christmas dearie.' His sleepy little voice answered, 'Where is she ?' It was a 'Merry' time for many of us in Mainpuri during the Christmas Days.

The First Day of Christmas

On the seventeenth of December we started with an entertainment in a city home. I'm sure the court-yard hadn't had such a grand cleaning for months. I helped to dismantle the walls



A VILLAGE SIX-SEATER

of their worn-out cooking utensils, old rags, etc., etc., including the goat-skin in which the father carries water to many homes. In their places were Christmas pictures and illustrated verses and coloured chains made by the boys and girls. A huge silver star hung over

the outer doorway and one big boy said 'We must decorate the outside of the house too.' At the close of the programme White Gifts for the King were brought, after which all went outside where stereoptican pictures were shown. Many people came, and all were very reverent.

Perhaps the entertainment for which the most elaborate preparations were made was the one given by Muhammadan boys and girls. Very attractive invitations had been made by them, also many Shepherd and Wise Men posters for decorating. Their court-yard looked quite Christmassy when everything was in place, including many festoons of silver and yellow stars. The programme consisted of Christ songs, recitations, and a drill for which the children wore white bands around the head with a silver star over the forehead. Their wands were covered with white on which they had pasted many little stars. This was quite an accomplishment in one sense, for while nearly all of the children had been in a D.V.B.S. drill last June, in this one I did not lead, but one of the older girls took my place that I might play the march on the folding organ. Then came tableaux of those scenes of Christ's childhood. How well they were portrayed! The beautiful coloured silk saris

made wonderful robes for King Herod and the Wise Men. The story of 'Why the Chimes Rang' was told, followed by White Gifts. A delicious tea was served to all the guests. Much time and thought had been spent on it. In my heart there was a feeling of great joy that the home and hearts of these people were open to the Christ-message.

An Open-Air Celebration

Friday found me in another section of the city where, out in the open grassy field near the road-side, the programme was held. Each one of these Bible School entertainments differed greatly. There were different groups, different castes and different friends who accompanied me. The third was among very poor people and several children had to be shooed away to clean up. There was no delay in their ablutions that day. Poor wee things! One's heart could not be hardened when the little gifts were given and the truants begged, 'Oh, just some little thing!' especially if little extras had been tucked out of sight for such truants. Before going home I visited a poor Brahmini who had just lost her little baby. Hers was a sad story: 'As lamp-lighting time came the little life went out, and I sat all night

alone by my dead baby. In the morning the sweeper came and I sent her to bring some one



HER CHRISTMAS DOLL

to come and carry out the baby. A carpenter came and I don't know where the little one was buried.' The husband, a very wicked man, was away at the time. She was glad for a bit of Christmas cheer and gave four annas (about eight cents) for the White Gift offering. For such the Christ Child came.

Saturday afternoon the entertainment for all the Christians in Mainpuri and others who would come, was held. In a large garden the people gathered. There were tableaux representing fourteen scenes in the babyhood of Christ, a life-sized camel, made of wood and rags and orientally decorated, on which a wise man sat in gorgeous apparel, a real live donkey that carried Mary to Egypt, cotton-covered boys making effective sheep—all shared in producing realistic scenes.

Sunday at four o'clock sixteen babies were baptized and two adult converts. Lovely babies they were, and only one or two cheeped during the whole service.

Sunday night stereoptican pictures were shown on the compound. It was a bit of pleasure to have a slide with a picture of my home church. It loomed up like a palace on the screen.

Monday afternoon, thirty boys and girls of my Primary Department in the Compound

S.S. rollicked in the sun in front of the bungalow. When everyone had had a turn at some game they marched into the drawing room where they encircled the little Christmas tree. What a picture those little faces were, with the dancing candle-light reflected in their already sparkling eyes!

Then at six o'clock came the party for all the household friends, the servants, their families, their guests and the teachers who serve with me. It is always a joyful time for all.

Christmas Decorations

It was Christmas Eve. The time when all of us tell that there is room in our hearts for Jesus by lighting our homes. Never did the little mustard-lights look so pretty. Nearly three hundred of them on my house, all the way around on the verandah steps, three rows on the verandah roof, on the house roof and on the tip-top of the chimney. Then there was a trip around the compound to see and admire the decorated homes. Our Training School people vie with each other in having the prettiest home. What works of art are produced in camels painted on mud walls, trees with fruit and all sorts of paper cutting designs! Perhaps the most unusual decoration was a picture painted on the mud wall of the

home of a recent Muhammadan convert. It was of the Taj Mahal. Surmounting the wonderful dome was the Cross of Jesus Christ. The thought came, 'Oh that the day might soon come when all India will worship the living Christ and not the dead Mumtaz Mahal!'

Merry Christmas! I bounded out of bed and my heart was glad with all the greetings of 'May your Great Day be a blessed one.' After a hurried little breakfast of tea and toast I donned my pretty new frock that mother sent me and my pretty new hat that my big sister rightly thought I needed and made six quick 'Merry Christmas' calls. Around the table in a home where the father had just been called Home, the family had gathered. There was another cup of tea, and then came morning service. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.'—The message made me glad that I have two good feet with which to run with a message. The White Gift offering amounted to about forty dollars and was sent to China for famine relief.

Christmas-night a missionary friend and I gave the Christmas dinner. There were fifteen of us. Mainpuri is a nice place to be in for Christmas, because there are so many nice people in it. Our tree was a beauty and our

two little missionary boys forgot all about having had pains over the plum pudding when they saw the tree. The four-year old became so



JOY SUPREME

friendly in spirit that he ventured to ask a gray-haired guest if she wore a wig.

Wednesday morning a breakfast with a

friend, for which there had not been time on Christmas Day. In the afternoon there was a celebration in a village seventeen miles away. I accompanied our district missionaries. There were games for old and young, a programme and pictures at dusk.

Thursday I commenced my trips to the city to give a message and a little gift to the friends we teach. This year it was mostly a message, but wherever I went the message was welcomed. Again on Friday in the city, and in the afternoon tiffin with one of my teachers. My! It seemed that I ate a bushel of puris during Christmas week. (Puris are cakes made of flour, filled with potatoes etc. and fried in clarified butter.)

The last of my Christmas joy was on Sunday afternoon, the 30th, when I hopped on my bicycle and went to see the potter and his wife in the city. The gift given to his wife was only an old faded sweater, long since too small for its owner, but it was taken with a great smile. As she hugged it close she said, 'How warm it will keep me when I sit turning the wet clay! Now wouldn't it be nice to have a blanket for the night?' She had never heard of Christ till that day. The husband had heard once, and they promised to attend church services.

Christmas brings lots of joy to lots of people,
and I wish it came twice a year.

Here are four lines that came to me some
time ago. I am passing them on to you with
my best of New Year greetings,—

When all looks black, you don't know what to do,
Up behind the black is a waiting blue.
Look up, rest your eyes for a little while.
There ! I knew you would see a Father's smile.

M. Anette Dennis.

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The Berean Beginners' Stories

First Year

October, November, December

Story 9



Artist—Copeland

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THE BEREAN GRADED SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
INTERNATIONAL COURSE



I WILL
GIVE
THANKS
UNTO
THE
LORD

PSALM 118:19b



THANKING GOD FOR GOOD GIFTS

ONE springtime a brown field lay waiting in the sunshine. Then the farmer came and plowed it, and hid away seeds in it. God's sunshine warmed the field, and God's raindrops watered it. The apple trees put out green leaves, and little plants sprang up from the seeds that the farmer hid away, until the brown field was a green field.

By and by the apple trees and the plants blossomed, and the field was white and pink and yellow. After a while the blossoms fell, and there were hard, green apples on the apple tree, and hard, green pumpkins on the pumpkin vines, and small ears of corn inside the corn husks.

There seemed to be no vegetables at all on the potato plants and the beets and the carrots, for they were hidden in the ground, and nobody could see them. But God was sending his sunshine and his raindrops, and taking care of them. The farmer helped by hoeing his field.

Then it grew hot and it was summer. The hard, green apples and pumpkins kept growing bigger and bigger, and, though there seemed to be no vegetables on the potato plants or on the beets and the carrots, underground they were growing bigger, too. Soft silk fringes hung from the corn husks. The cabbages were large and green.

Now it was autumn. Some of the hard, green apples turned red and some turned yellow, and they all became soft. The pumpkins were orange color, and so heavy that they lay on the ground beneath the vines. The leaves of the potato plants began to turn yellow, as if to say, "We are of no use any more. Dig down in the ground and find our secret." God's sunshine and raindrops had ripened all the fruits and vegetables.

The farmer came into his field. He heaped the yellow pumpkins in a wagon. He climbed the apple trees and picked the red and yellow apples and put them in baskets. He dug into the ground beneath the potato and beet and carrot plants, and found hiding there brown potatoes and red beets and orange-colored carrots. He pulled off the husks and the silk from the corn, and there were ripe, yellow ears. He put the cabbages in a wheelbarrow.

Then he carried all the apples and pumpkins and potatoes and beets and carrots to his barn, and stored them away in barrels and bins. He took the corn to the miller to be ground into yellow meal.

. And now winter is here. The field is brown again, and nothing will

grow. But the farmer does not worry. His barn is full of hay and corn for the cows and horses. His cellar is stored with apples and pumpkins and potatoes and beets and cabbages and all sorts of fruits and vegetables.

The farmer sells some of his fruits and vegetables to the grocer, and he sells him, too, the corn meal that the miller has ground. Now all through the cold winter fathers and mothers can buy food from the grocer for their children to eat.

Before the cold winter comes we have a day for saying "Thank you" for these good things. It is called Thanksgiving Day. It comes after the fruits and vegetables have been gathered in.

Whom shall the children thank for their food? Their fathers and mothers, of course, for the fathers buy it and the mothers cook it; the grocer, for he sells it; the miller, for he ground the corn into meal; the farmer, for he planted and hoed the brown field, and gathered the fruits and vegetables.

There is some One else we need to thank most of all. Who sent the sunshine and the raindrops? Who made the seeds grow and ripened the fruits and vegetables? It was God, the heavenly Father.

We should thank God for everything we eat and drink and wear, and for the houses we live in, and for the fires that keep us warm, and for our fathers and mothers, who take care of us. All the good things we have are gifts from God, the heavenly Father. It makes me feel like saying, "I will give thanks unto the Lord."

The Bible Story: Genesis 8:22; Deuteronomy 8:7-10; Psalm 104:13-15; Song of Solomon 7:13b; Psalm 105:1-5.



A THOUGHT

It is very nice to think
The world is full of meat and drink,

With little children saying grace,
In every Christian kind of place.

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

From "A Child's Garden of Verses," by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.



THE MOTHER'S PART.—To take her children to visit the grocer, and, if possible, the miller and the farmer, and to point out their stores of food and thank them; to encourage the children to thank God for food at each meal.

1—9—4

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